

# DEVELOPMENT IN ZIMBABWE



'Education is the hammer of skill'

## The Role of the University

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**A Lecture Series at the University of Oslo**

**June 1 st — June 8 th, 1983**

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## F O R E W O R D

This is a compilation of a series of lectures given at the University of Oslo in June 1983 by staff members of the University of Zimbabwe. They participated in a delegation to the University of Oslo to explore the opportunities for building academic contacts between individuals and departments at the two Universities. Their visit constituted one important step in a long process of developing the content and format of a collaborative program between the University of Oslo and the University of Zimbabwe, the first "case" in the general efforts of the University of Oslo to establish new forms of academic cooperation with the third world.

It was felt natural at the time of this first extended visit from Zimbabwe that the 9 members of the delegation should provide information about the current activities and plans of their respective departments/faculties. The lectures were given over five consecutive days and were open to anyone interested. All contributors agreed to the proposal of having the lectures distributed afterwards, first and foremost at the University of Oslo as a contribution to the mutual exchange of information among staff and students.

Due to logistic and administrative reasons it took much longer than intended to get the various papers ready for presentation. In the period that has passed, many developments have taken place at the rapidly expanding University of Zimbabwe. The papers should therefore not be taken as reflecting the situation today in all aspects. Nevertheless, the broad lines of the basic philosophy of and challenges to the University of Zimbabwe are well reflected in the papers even if certain specific informations may be somewhat outdated.

The Center for International Development Studies (SIU) is pleased to submit this one very concrete expression of the efforts of many individuals, departments and university officials towards an experiment in academic contribution to "the North-South dialogue". The thrust of this experiment is how to break with the dependency model typical also of so many intellectual relations between the North and the South in the past, and how to replace it with a model based on equality and mutual benefit in whatever relationship that may evolve.

The volume also contains the contribution of the late professor W.Kekulawela, Vice-Chancellor at the University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka, at the time. He was invited as a representative of the university milieus in Sri Lanka to observe the process that was to take place between colleagues at the University of Oslo and the University of Zimbabwe, with a view to possible similar ventures that could be opened up with university milieus in Sri Lanka (the second of the "priority countries" originally chosen by SIU). Professor Kekulawela made a number of contacts in various departments particularly within the arts and humanities, and was to write his own report and suggestions during the following autumn term. SIU deeply regrets his sad and untimely sudden death only three months after his visit to Oslo. We appreciate professor Kekulawela's contribution to the lecture series in 1983 and thereby also to the enrichment of this volume, pointing to the possibilities of interesting South-South-North relationships in future university collaboration.

It is a privilege for SIU to help strengthen the ties between the University of Oslo and universities in the third world. We thank everybody who has contributed to this volume, and all others who have supported the idea of egalitarian university relationships which we are trying to promote.

August 1985

Wenche Barth Eide

Chairperson

Center for International Development Studies (SIU)

# The University of Zimbabwe - a Profile

**Prof. G.L.Chavunduka, Chairman, Department of Sociology**

## Brief history

The University of Zimbabwe is the only university in the country at present. It is therefore the focus in the country of university education in general. The country has at present about 7½ million people. The University is situated in the capital city of Harare. Over 90% of the University funds come from the Government of Zimbabwe.

This national university has been in existence for 28 years. It was established on the 11th of February 1955, as the University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. It served the whole of the then Federation of Southern Rhodesia, Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland. These three countries later became Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi.

The college enjoyed a special relation with the University of London, whose degrees it awarded until it became the University of Rhodesia in 1970. In that year the college and the University of London agreed to a phased termination of the Scheme of Special Relation so that the last intake for degrees of the University of London was that of 1970.

The Medical School was opened in 1963. It was not affiliated to the University of London but to the University of Birmingham in the United Kingdom. Students in the medical school obtained a Birmingham qualification. In 1970 the formal association of the University of Birmingham was also terminated and the last intake for medical degrees of the University of Birmingham was that of 1970. At the independence of Zimbabwe in 1980, the university assumed the new name of Zimbabwe.

The University College opened with a total of 68 students. Today the number of students is about 3.500 distributed across all faculties. The full-time teaching establishment consists of over 370 members of staff and there are more than 130 part-time teaching staff.

The faculties of Arts, Science and Education were the first to be established when the University was opened. The next was the Faculty of Medicine, which as I have already pointed out, was opened in 1963. In 1974 the first students for a four year degree were accepted into the new Faculty of Engineering, and in 1980 the Faculties of Agriculture and Commerce and Law were established, these disciplines having previously been included in the Faculties of Science and Social Studies respectively. In January 1982 the Faculty of Veterinary Science was established as an entirely new venture with an intake of 18 students.

Thus at present the University of Zimbabwe is divided into 9 faculties. These are: Agriculture, Arts, Commerce and Law, Education, Engineering, Medicine, Science, Social Studies and Veterinary Science.

### Organisation

The highest governing body of the University of Zimbabwe is the University Council. The Council consists of 12 persons appointed by the Minister of Education and Culture; 9 persons who are members of the Academic staff appointed by the Senate, and one representative of each of the following:

The Administrative staff,  
The Workers Committee,  
The non-Senate members of the Academic staff,  
The Clerical and Technical staff,  
The trade Unions,  
The Zimbabwe Teachers Association,  
The Associated Chambers of Commerce,  
The Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries.  
One person appointed by the Minister of Agriculture,  
Two persons who are distinguished academics appointed by  
the Council; and One person who is a graduate of the Uni-  
versity appointed by the Convocation.

This brings the total membership of Council to 33. But in addition there are Ex Officio members, that is, the Chancellor of the University, the Vice Chancellor and the Pro Vice Chancellor. The President of the Republic of Zimbabwe is the Chancellor of the University.

Much of the work of the Council is, however, performed by a smaller body known as the Executive Committee which usually meets once a month. The Executive Committee has 17 members.

Below the Council is the Senate of the University. The Senate is the academic authority of the University. Its membership consists of the Vice Chancellor, the Pro Vice Chancellor, the Deans of faculties, Chairmen of Departments, Professors and the Librarian. In addition there is one member of the teaching staff from each faculty elected annually by such staff; the President of the Students Union and 5 students elected annually by the students themselves. The most important sub-committees of Council and Senate are the Finance Committee, the Academic Committee, the Salaries and Conditions of Service Committee, the Budget and Development Committee, the Research Board, and the Promotions Committee.

Below the Senate are the faculty boards. Faculty board meetings are chaired by the Dean. At present all members of the Academic staff in each faculty are members of the Faculty Board. The Dean is elected by the Faculty Board and holds office for three years. In addition to the full-time academic staff of the faculty, other members of the board include two students



elected annually by the students in the faculty and any other persons as may be assigned to the Faculty Board by the Senate. The Vice-Chancellor and the Pro-Vice Chancellor have the right to attend any meeting of a Faculty Board or of any committee thereof.

Chairmen of departments are appointed by the Vice-Chancellor, on behalf of the Council, from among the full-time members of the academic staff of the department after consultation with each member of the academic staff in that department, and the Dean of the faculty to which that department is allocated. A Chairman of a department holds office for a period of three years. As in the case of a Dean, he or she is eligible for re-appointment.

Students enrolled for our first degrees, except in the faculties of medicine and veterinary science, normally take 3 or 4 years to complete the degree. The degree in veterinary science takes about 5 years, and the degrees in medicine normally take 6 years to complete. Students who enrol for post-graduate studies stay for another year or two of full-time study in order to obtain a masters degree. Doctorate degrees such as the Doctor of Philosophy degree are awarded after a further 3 or 4 years of university work. In addition to these degrees we offer diploma and certificate courses in a number of fields.

#### University and Community

For many years the University of Zimbabwe was not an integral part of the Zimbabwean society. It was an ivory tower almost detached from the community in which it existed, observing society from up there. This was due, at least in part, to the exaggerated emphasis in the past on the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake in the research activities of the university. But this was not the only reason. The forging of a close relationship between the university and the community, and between the university and national development, was further inhibited by the nature of the social and political environment in which

the university existed and operated. It was at odds with the dominant politics at that time. It was attempting to carry on in a society which was organised and ordered on a racial basis.

Up to the time of independence in 1980, Zimbabwe had and still has a dual economy. There is a relatively small but highly sophisticated sector alongside a large underdeveloped or rural and peasant sector. About 80 per cent of our population belong to the peasant sector and yet the focus in the past both in government and in the university was on the small economic sector at the expense of the large underdeveloped sector. Policies of government and those of the university favoured the small commercial sector. Very little research was done in the peasant sector. Economic, social and political problems of the poor were largely ignored. Moreover, the university tended to draw its students from the middle and upper classes of that society.

This focus on the small economic sector distorted the role of the university in the country. As a result of this, the university was not regarded by the majority of our people as an integral part of the society. This is the image we have been attempting to change since 1980.

We have attempted to change this image, firstly, by assisting qualified boys and girls, men and women from the peasant sector to enter the university. Whereas the total student population of the university was about 1.000 at the time of independence in 1980, today, as I have already pointed out, we are literally bursting at the seams. We already have about 3½ thousand students, and we expect to reach the 6.000 mark in the next two years. The majority of these students have come from the peasant sector.

We are also attempting to change the image of our university by making our research activities relevant to the whole of Zimbabwe. It is now our policy that the battle against ignorance,

disease and poverty should without exception be an active concern of all academics.

At our graduation ceremony this year, some 512 graduands received their first degree, and 58 graduands received their post-graduate degree. We also had our first graduates in food science, and the first graduates with degrees of Master of Education in Educational Administration and Educational Psychology. We also had for the first time recipients of the Diploma in Child Health and the Diploma in Ophthalmology. This was the first time that our faculty of medicine has awarded these postgraduate diplomas. In the past we had to send candidates to the United Kingdom for this training.

In addition to the degrees and postgraduate diplomas, the university, as I have already pointed out, now awards a large number of diplomas and certificates ranging from certificates in education made through Associate Colleges, to diplomas in Theology, Social Work and Business Studies. A number of teachers' colleges spread out through the country are now affiliated to the university. Other schools affiliated include a theological seminary and School of Social Work. All this is an indication of our present desire to broaden the university's outreach to the people of Zimbabwe and to contribute to their well being.

We acknowledge that these graduates are inadequate in terms of the needs of national development, particularly in such fields as agriculture, engineering, medicine science and veterinary science. Our capacity in these areas is limited by the demands of laboratory space, equipment and staffing. We are however working desperately to increase this capacity.

We are in the process of reviewing the curricula in the various faculties. I can only mention a few landmarks that have been in this process. In the Faculty of Arts, the department of History has launched a diploma course in war studies for the high ranking officers in the Zimbabwe Armed Forces. Plans are under way to

establish departments of metallurgy and mining engineering. An undergraduate degree programme in regional and urban planning will soon be introduced to complement the Masters programme. A diploma course in rural planning will be introduced next year. The Faculty of Commerce and Law is deeply involved in conducting courses for magistrates and for members of the banking community. These are but only a few of the many innovations which have or are being introduced. Perhaps, more importantly, we will launch within the next few weeks a vigorous and comprehensive staff development programme which is designed to strengthen and to ensure that the university is staffed with people who are dedicated and committed to the goals of the new realities of The University of Zimbabwe.

Because of these efforts there is now closer communication between the University and the Government and between the university and the public at large. The University of Zimbabwe is beginning to play a more active and meaningful role in the development of Zimbabwe as a whole.

Development in our case must embrace the challenges caused by the search for national and cultural identity, by problems of poverty, hunger and disease and the need for social adjustment.

The University of Zimbabwe is, therefore, being asked by society to take a more active role in identifying and investigating these social, economic and political problems. It is being asked to provide leadership in the area of research, particularly applied research, research directed towards issues that affect ordinary men and women.

#### Needed Research

The government of Zimbabwe has already indicated areas where it needs immediate assistance in terms of research. There is firstly the agrarian question, that is land tenure, land reform, social transformation and development, land distribution, overcrowding and underutilization of land. Studies are needed of rural class structures and socio-economic problems of trans-

formation. Other important areas include education, health and the role of women in society. Then there is trade unionism, workers participation in industry, transfer of technology, the state and the private sector, industrial relations and so on.

There is a lot of work to be done. Work is already in progress but some of this work is handicapped by the shortage of funds and manpower.

In fact there is hardly an area of life in Zimbabwe that has been fully studied. Many fields are awaiting discovery; indeed the sky is the limit.

Let me summarise this part of our discussion. The country is asking the intellectuals to carry out an examination of land tenure and land distribution in Zimbabwe; to carry out an analysis of land reform in Zimbabwe; to carry out a review of our land resettlement programmes.

In education, research is needed on education and transition in Zimbabwe. The object here should be to locate the relationship between the educational system and the development process in the country. An analysis of curriculum change and development is necessary.

In industry, studies of trade unionism since Independence are needed. Such studies may be aimed at the analysis of the character and role of post-colonial unions in the changing shape of industrial relations. Studies should examine the changing patterns and objectives of unionization. Other studies must investigate preconditions for the establishment of effective workers participation in industry.

Then there is the whole area of science and technology. Action to be taken here includes an examination and establishment of institutions and the necessary infrastructure for science and technology base. This process should include among others,

the re-examination of indigenous science and technologies whose role in maintaining African peoples and their cultures for centuries is no mean achievement. A review of existing legislation regarding technology transfer and patent rights is also needed. Assistance is also needed in the selection of appropriate technology and the introduction of such technology at all levels of education.

In food production, intellectuals are called upon to help formulate policies that will help improve production and productivity. Food losses due to poor methods of farming and storage need re-examination. This also goes for strategic food reserves and preservation.

There is the issue of energy both renewable and non-renewable. Intellectual guidance is needed to advise on how best the country can harvest its energy resources for the welfare of its peoples.

My last example relates to vital statistics. One serious handicap for development in most developing countries is the lack of reliable statistics. We need accurate statistics on all aspects of our activities such as population, and figures related to natural resources. We also need statistics on women and development covering employment, health and education.

#### Problems

There are problems however. I have already talked briefly about the shortage of manpower in the university itself. If this issue is not resolved, the university will not be able to perform its function effectively.

The ability of the university to carry out its function efficiently depends on the strength and on the calibre of its academic, administrative as well as technical and clerical staff. Since our university's main function apart from research is to produce manpower for the country, it cannot expect any

other institution to produce manpower to serve it. This is the only university in the country. Thus apart from producing high calibre staff for Government, Commerce and Industry, we have the responsibility of producing staff for our own university. The kind and quality of staff the university produces for itself, also determines the kind and quality of staff it provides the nation with.

We have therefore decided to establish a University Staff Development Programme whose main objective is to identify potential academic staff from among the undergraduates of the University as well as from other sectors in the country, and then assist them to obtain the necessary qualifications. This Fund will form part of annual recurrent budget of the institution. It will cost large sums of money. Some of the money will be from Government subvention. But this will not be adequate. In addition to funds raised locally, the university shall appeal to other agencies in order to get sponsorship for potential staff of junior staff already on the establishment who have to undertake studies or attend courses abroad.

Shortage of academic staff in the university will also affect our research activities, and will seriously limit our contribution to national development. Partly as a result of this the Government of Zimbabwe recently established an Institute of Development Studies known as ZIDS, which it is hoped will be able to tackle the social and economic problems described earlier more quickly than the university. Some members of the university community will also participate in ZIDS in an advisory capacity.

The objects of ZIDS are:

1. To provide an institutional home or undertaking, promoting and co-ordinating research and training to service the Government in its task of establishing a society in transition from colonial dependence to socialist independence.

2. To liaise with research and training institutions elsewhere in the country as well as in Government Ministries and the University of Zimbabwe.
3. To identify for policy formulation and implementation the strategic long-term as well as the tactical short-term problems that may arise in the task of restructuring the economy and society.
4. To provide training courses in Development Studies for Senior Officials of the Public Service and parastatals.
5. To provide short-term training courses in specific areas of development planning and evaluation.
6. To create a data bank of research materials and development for the purpose of preservation and use by researchers at ZIDS and by other scholars.

At present ZIDS has four full-time researchers, and a number of important research projects are already being carried out.

Although ZIDS will do a lot of good work in addition to the work already being done in the university, it is clear that both ZIDS and The University of Zimbabwe will need the assistance of other institutes and organisations that are genuinely interested in the development of Zimbabwe. The amount of work to be done is great. Thus we attach great importance to co-operation with other institutes in Africa, in the third world and abroad who wish to assist.



*The Seal of the University  
of Zimbabwe*





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